

NEVADA COUNTY TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

Minutes of Meeting

March 16, 2005

A meeting of the Nevada County Transportation Commission (NCTC) was held on Wednesday, March 16, 2005, in the City of Nevada City Council Chambers, 317 Broad Street, Nevada City, California. The meeting was scheduled for 8:30 a.m.

Members Present: Nate Beason, Tim Brady, Patti Ingram, Russ Steele, Josh Susman*, Conley Weaver

Members Absent: Robin Sutherland

Staff Present: Dan Landon, Executive Director; Nancy Holman, Administrative Services Officer; Michael Woodman, Transportation Planner; Toni Perry, Administrative Assistant

Standing Orders: Vice-Chairman Steele convened the Nevada County Transportation Commission meeting at 8:30 a.m.

Pledge of Allegiance:

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:

1. Financial Reports:

A. January and February 2005

There were no comments.

2. Correspondence:

E. Nevada County Board of Supervisors - Letter to Governor Schwarzenegger requesting his administration stop further suspensions or loans of Proposition 42 or other transportation money to the General Fund to balance the State Budget. 1/28/05, File 720.2.

F. Truckee-North Tahoe Transportation Management Association - Letter to Congressman Doolittle restating TNT/TMA's support for federal earmark in TEA-21 Reauthorization to replace the SR 89 Donner Creek Underpass (Mousehole) in Truckee. 1/31/05, File 1420.

G. Sacramento Bee – Article entitled, "Measure Restricts Raid on Gas Tax". 2/18/05, File 570.

Executive Director Landon referred to correspondence items E, F, and G pertaining to transportation funding issues, and stated he would provide more detail on these items in the Executive Director's Report.

H. Email from Phil Carville and email response from Dan Landon – Regarding an article written in The Union by Sherri Baxter entitled, "Simple Ideas to Address Traffic Woes." Emails were sent to Commissioners, agenda packet recipients, and Mr. Carville's email distribution list. 3/4/05, File 772.

Commissioner Brady mentioned the subject of Ms. Baxter's article was similar to the issue he brought up in a previous meeting suggesting that NCTC conduct a survey to identify minor transportation projects to improve traffic operations in Nevada County. The response at that time was there were insufficient funds in the Overall Work Program (OWP) to complete the project. Commissioner Brady asked the Commission to revisit his proposal, and to address local traffic problems as an NCTC action item before they become issues discussed in the local newspaper. Executive Director Landon responded he is currently developing the 2005/06 OWP, and he plans to include funding for a traffic operations analysis. Mr. Landon stated he would share a proposed scope of work with the Commission prior to starting the project.

At this point in the meeting Vice-Chairman Steele introduced the newest commissioner, Nate Beason, who is representing the Nevada County Board of Supervisors.

*Commissioner Susman arrived at the meeting 8:40 a.m.

Shelly Crawford, a member of the public, requested to speak about correspondence item H on behalf of Sherri Baxter and her article in The Union. Ms. Crawford questioned if any action was planned in this year's budget to improve the Richardson Street/E. Main Street intersection or if it had to wait until next year. Executive Director Landon explained the intersection is under the jurisdiction of the City of Grass Valley. He reported that the City is in negotiations to obtain the additional right-of-way necessary to extend the westbound left turn lane, which would improve the traffic flow. He stated Keith Sauers, City of Grass Valley Interim Engineer, is also developing improvements for the right-turn lane into the Post Office to improve the eastbound traffic flow. Executive Director Landon added these two issues will be going before the City's Traffic Safety Committee and Keith Sauers could inform her of the meeting time.

Commissioner Brady questioned what could be learned by this omission of planning to obtain adequate right-of-way at the Richardson Street traffic light to avoid future problems of like magnitude. Executive Director Landon responded that when Grant Johnson modeled the intersection he anticipated all that was needed, which included a longer turn lane. When the City of Grass Valley got into final design of the intersection, they were constrained by the right-of-way that was available. Mr. Landon noted that as a project goes through final design, there is need for continuing dialogue to insure that the final project is consistent with the initial plans.

Commissioner Ingram assured NCTC the City of Grass Valley is working closely with the owner of Maria's Restaurant to acquire additional right-of-way to lengthen the westbound left turn pocket at the Richardson Street/East Main Street intersection. Commissioner Ingram reported on previous actions taken by the City Council aimed at improving traffic flow at East Main Street/Richardson/Bennett and at Idaho-Maryland/East Main Street intersections. She mentioned the City's efforts to relocate the post office and referred to an article in The Union written by Mayor Tassone that listed several options for improving traffic flow at the East Main Street/Richardson/Bennett intersection.

Commissioner Beason mentioned the recommendation to put a letter drop-box around the corner from the current post office to draw some traffic away from the intersection. Commissioner Ingram responded the City is working with NCTC on this idea as part of the Grass Valley Corridor Improvement Project (GVCIP).

Commissioner Susman suggested the City of Grass Valley determine when the lease will expire for the post office at the current location and possibly not allow them to renegotiate a lease. He stated this could help facilitate moving the post office to a more suitable location in the city.

3. Executive Director's Report

3.2 2006 State Transportation Improvement Program Outlook

Executive Director Landon provided the Commissioners and audience a handout that explained the federal and state transportation funding process and its relationship to the State Budget problem. He explained the Proposition 42 sales tax initiative on gasoline that passed with a 70% majority and how the money is being diverted to the State Fund instead of funding the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) and city and county road programs. He noted that the diversion of funds is an issue for local governments as well as regional agencies. Mr. Landon added that the sales tax on gasoline and diesel fuel helps support local transit services. He stated that 85% of California citizens live in a county where a local sales tax measure supports the transportation system funding program.

Mr. Landon pointed out that within the STIP there are two main programs: the Interregional Transportation Improvement Program (ITIP), which receives 25% of the funds and is controlled by Caltrans, and the Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP) that receives 75% of the funds and is controlled by the various regional agencies. He explained the Dorsey Drive Interchange and the SR 89 Mousehole are funded from the RTIP. While some funds were allocated to the Dorsey Drive Interchange, the California Transportation Commission (CTC) has been unable to transfer any funds to the Mousehole project for the past three years. Mr. Landon explained that the SR 49 widening project is funded from both the ITIP and RTIP funding categories.

Executive Director Landon reviewed the current funding situation described in the NCTC newsletter and explained that the State Highway Operations and Protection Program (SHOPP) investment for maintenance is always a high priority, but a current report from the Caltrans headquarters staff indicates that 25% of the state highway system is in a distressed condition. He said Caltrans goal was to reduce that to 10-15% of the system over the next ten years, but \$36 billion will be needed to do that. Mr. Landon reported the current proposal to fund the SHOPP is only \$1.7 billion per year, which is only half of what is needed to achieve Caltrans goal.

A discussion among Commissioners Steele, Brady, Susman, Weaver, Beason, and Executive Director Landon took place regarding the need to enlist other agencies and organizations, and possibly a lobbyist, to keep pressure on the Legislature and Administration to stop diverting Proposition 42 funds from transportation projects. Commissioner Susman requested Mr. Landon spend as much time as he can to provide information and education on this subject. Vice-Chairman Steele requested Mr. Landon identify for the Commissioners specific topics they should be paying attention to as NCTC Commissioners.

3.3 Capitol Corridor Extension to Reno Feasibility Study

Commissioner Susman shared his excitement for a possible extension of the Capitol Corridor to Reno and asked that NCTC continue to support the planning project to get the corridor extended through California into Nevada.

3.4 Grass Valley Submits Dorsey Drive Interchange for an Earmark in Federal Transportation Reauthorization

Executive Director Landon reported that Grass Valley submitted a request for an earmark in the Federal Transportation Act to Congressman John Doolittle's office. Subsequently Mr. Landon

received a call from Doolittle's staff indicating the Federal Transportation bill had passed out of the House of Representatives, and there were two earmarks for Nevada County. One is \$3.5 million for the SR 89 Mousehole in Truckee and the other is \$930,000 for relocation of the transit transfer station at Church and Neal Streets. The Senate is working on their version of the reauthorization bill and the congressional staff believes they will see a bill passed in the May/June timeframe. The President's staff has indicated that he would be willing to sign a bill with funding allocated at the \$284 billion level approved by the House.

4A. Caltrans District 3 - Project Status Report: Tom Brannon, Caltrans Project Manager for Nevada County.

Tom Brannon commented that the lack of funding has affected the delivery dates of three Nevada County STIP projects: The Truckee Bypass Mitigation Planting, the Dorsey Drive Interchange, and the SR 49 Widening Project from Combie Road to Grass Valley. He reported the Truckee Bypass Mitigation Planting project was finally funded at the March 2005 CTC meeting, after being scheduled on the CTC agenda four different times. This cost Caltrans additional staff time that could have been spent on other projects. Mr. Brannon mentioned two SHOPP projects: the SR 20 Safety Realignment and Widening job, and the SR 49 Shoulder Widening project at Pekolee, which have guaranteed funds since they are both safety projects. He noted the three new projects are a combination of Caltrans funds and local funding: Grass Valley Corridor Improvement Project (GVCIP), the Truckee SR 89/I-80 dual roundabouts project, and proposed roundabouts on SR 89 north of Truckee.

Tom Brannon gave a brief summary of local project activity that has occurred since the last NCTC meeting. Those include:

- *Truckee Bypass Mitigation Planting* – The project will be advertised for construction in April 2005. An addendum will probably need to be included since the original submission is three years old and nature has provided some new vegetation on its own. Commissioner Susman noted this project is not just an aesthetic focus, but there was additional motivation on the project since Caltrans will help address water quality erosion control issues being stressed by a water quality agency.
- *Dorsey Drive Interchange* – Conceptual geometric approval is underway and an estimate is being prepared to see if current funds will cover the purchase of right-of-way (R/W) and construction of the southbound on-ramp. Executive Director Landon stated this assumes money will flow from the STIP in the years it is promised. Mr. Brannon went on to explain if the \$4.5 million in STIP funds are not voted and added to the \$1.5 million of local funds, there will not be enough money to purchase R/W.

Commissioner Brady questioned Mr. Brannon's notation under the Dorsey Drive report: "All options including developer funds or a 'measure' fund should be explored." He asked which agency would be in charge of exploring other funding opportunities. Executive Director Landon stated he could provide NCTC with cost estimates or revenue estimates of different funding opportunities, but if a local sales tax measure were pursued, private sector support would be needed. Commissioner Brady asked for examples from other agencies that have successfully accomplished an alternate procedure for acquiring funds. Commissioner Steele echoed the importance of Nevada County taking action to solve its own transportation problems. Mr. Brannon restated that most new projects are being funded with local funds.

- *SR 49 Five Lane Widening Project From Combie Road to Grass Valley* – Caltrans has reduced the project limits to a one-mile section near the LaBarr Meadows Road intersection. Two public meetings are scheduled for Caltrans to show plans and to get public input on this project: April 19 at the Higgins Lions Club and April 26 at the Foothill Community Church.
- *SR 49 From Lime Kiln to Pekolee Dr. Shoulder Widening* – Trees wider than four inches in diameter were removed along this proposed spring construction area. Funding for construction is to be voted on at the April CTC meeting.
- *Idaho-Maryland Road/Frontage Road Improvements (GVCIP)* – Commissioner Ingram questioned Mr. Brannon on the timing of Caltrans Traffic Operations review of alternatives proposed for this project. Mr. Brannon replied that Caltrans will begin their review as soon as the draft Project Study Report and Project Report (PSR/PR) is complete. Executive Director Landon added it would be about three weeks before Bickett Engineering, Inc. and PRISM Engineering complete the draft PSR/PR and Caltrans gets the report to review.

Mr. Brannon reported to the Commission, in addition to his Project Manager work for Nevada County, he would be covering for two supervisors in his office who have been given special assignments until July.

Chet Krage from the audience recommended the NCTC endorse and work with Caltrans to locate an area near the Nevada County/Yuba County line to build a gateway monument, in conjunction with the SR 20 safety realignment and widening job currently under construction. Mr. Brannon questioned if NCTC also wanted to look into doing aesthetic upgrading of the bridge at this entry point. Mr. Landon asked Mr. Brannon to help him prepare information for the commission on these two issues.

4B. Caltrans District 3 - Project Status Report: Ann Marie Robinson, Caltrans Regional Planner for Nevada County.

- *City of Grass Valley Park and Ride at Colfax Avenue/South Auburn* – Ann Marie Robinson reported she had spoken with Howard Levine, Executive Director of the Grass Valley Downtown Association, regarding abandoned cars and commercial vehicles at the downtown Park and Ride. Ms. Robinson spoke about modifying signage to promote long-term parking. She also reported that Mr. Levine would like to meet with Bill Derrick and Amtrak to see if there could be a transit stop located at the Park and Ride.
5. Truckee's Triennial Performance Audit Update: At NCTC's May 19, 2004 meeting, the Commissioners had requested that in approximately six months, Alex Terrazas from the Town of Truckee, provide a status report on the implementation of the recommendations in Truckee's Performance Audit.

Mr. Landon commented that the report addressed performance audit recommendations. Mr. Terrazas provided the written report, and all of the issues have been addressed.

CONSENT ITEMS:

6. NCTC Minutes: January 19, 2005. *Approved.*

7. 2005/06 FY State Transit Assistance Apportionments: *Adopted the apportionment table as a basis for allocation from the State Transit Assistance Fund for 2005/06 FY.*
8. Revised Findings of Apportionment for 2004/05 and Preliminary Findings for 2005/06: *Adopted Resolution 05-04 approving the revised findings of apportionment for 2004/05 FY, and adopted Resolution 05-05 approving the preliminary findings of apportionment for 2005/06 FY.*
9. Staff Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) and Performance Bonus: *Adopted Resolutions 05-06 and 05-07.*

Commissioner Ingram made a motion to approve the consent items. Commissioner Brady seconded the motion. Commissioners Susman and Beason abstained. The motion passed.

ACTION ITEMS:

10. Election of Officers

Vice-Chairman Steele opened nominations for chairman. Commissioner Beason nominated Commissioner Ingram. Vice-Chairman Steele seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Vice-Chairman Steele asked for nominations for vice-chairman and Commissioner Brady nominated Commissioner Weaver. Commissioner Beason seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Chairman Ingram presided over the meeting from this point forward.

11. Annual Transit Needs Assessment.

Executive Director Landon explained NCTC's annual process to determine if there are unmet transit needs within Nevada County that are reasonable to meet. Commissioner Susman made a motion to approve the Nevada County Transit Needs Assessment for FY 2004/05 and adopt Resolution 05-08. Vice-Chairman Weaver seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

12. Town of Truckee Allocation Request for Deferred Revenue: Through the adoption of Resolution 2005-09, the Town of Truckee has requested \$36,388 of Local Transportation Funds (LTF), identified as deferred revenue in the 2003/04 fiscal audit, be reallocated for transit/paratransit operations in FY 2004/05.

Commissioner Susman made a motion to adopt Resolution 05-09. Commissioner Steele seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

13. Allocation Request from the City of Grass Valley: Through the adoption of Resolutions 04-69 and 05-02, the City of Grass Valley is requesting an allocation of \$163,338 of Local Transportation Funds for transit/paratransit operations in FY 2004/05.

Commissioner Steele made a motion to adopt Resolution 05-10. Commissioner Susman seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

14. Allocation Requests from the City of Nevada City: Through the adoption of Resolutions 2005-04 and 2005-05, Nevada City is requesting an allocation of \$40,423 of Local Transportation Funds for transit/paratransit operations in FY 2004/05; and through adoption of Resolution 2004-13, Nevada City is requesting an allocation of \$31,838 of LTF for pedestrian/bicycle/sidewalk safety improvements.

Vice-Chairman Weaver moved to adopt Resolutions 05-11 and 05-12. Commissioner Brady seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

15. Allocation Request from Nevada County: Through the adoption of Resolution 05-56, the County of Nevada is requesting an allocation of \$40,798.00 from Community Transit Services Funds for transit/paratransit operations in FY 2004/05.

Executive Director Landon reported there was no documentation to support the request, so item #15 was deferred to the May NCTC meeting.

16. Federal Transit Administration Section 5310: Adoption of the Regional Priority List.

Executive Director Landon stated Mike Woodman developed a regional priority list and there were three projects submitted from Gold Country Telecare, with no objection received regarding our scoring and ranking.

Commissioner Steele made a motion to adopt Resolution 05-14. Commissioner Susman seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

17. Western Nevada County Transit/Paratransit Governance Study Final Report: Final report was in Commissioner's packets only.

Executive Director Landon reported that the main recommendation of the report was that the member agencies of the Joint Powers Agreement (City of Grass Valley, City of Nevada City, and Nevada County) should consider and move towards establishing a Joint Powers Authority over Transit Services. He also reported there was a second recommendation supported by a transit users group, the Project Advisory Committee, and the Transit Services Commission, that called for the formation of a citizens transit advisory committee. Mr. Landon said the City of Grass Valley has considered this study, approved the recommendations, and has directed their staff to begin working on negotiations to affect the development of that board. He stated Grass Valley would like to move forward in a measured way so that no additional reductions to the existing services would be necessitated. Mr. Landon stated the contract to conduct the governance study was completed by Nelson\Nygaard Consulting Associates and asked the Commission to accept the report as complete.

Commissioner Brady made a motion to accept the report. Commissioner Susman seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

18. Amendment II to the 2004/05 Overall Work Program.

Executive Director Landon explained this was an administrative amendment to the Overall Work Program (OWP) necessitated by the revised findings of apportionment.

Commissioner Susman moved to adopt Resolution 05-15. Commissioner Steele seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

19. Proposed Projects for 2005/06 Overall Work Program.

Executive Director Landon explained the annual work program, which reflects the NCTC Mission Statement as well as an implementation of our regional transportation planning process. He highlighted three new activities proposed for inclusion in the Overall Work Program (OWP):

- 1) To develop a web-based traffic database that would include completed traffic counts and reports.
- 2) To update NCTC's 2002 regional traffic model.
- 3) Conduct a Traffic Operations study to identify low-cost interim improvements.

A discussion ensued regarding the proposed traffic database.

Executive Director Landon stated that the proposed 2005/06 OWP would be taken to member agencies for review and comment. No further action was taken by the Commission at this time.

NONAGENDIZED QUESTIONS AND RESPONSE:

Commissioner Brady directed a question to John Rumsey, Senior Civil Engineer at the Nevada County Department of Transportation and Sanitation (DOTS), regarding construction of improvements at the intersection of Idaho-Maryland Road and Brunswick Road. John Rumsey responded DOTS would experiment with alternative barriers and final construction will take place during the summer of 2005.

Commissioner Brady asked Mr. Rumsey when the second exit proposed for Loma Rica Drive would be constructed. Mr. Rumsey replied that project would conceivably be constructed in five to ten years. He stated that improvements completed a few years ago have significantly reduced accidents and delay. He said Nevada County DOTS would need to do more detailed analysis of the two options previously identified, which were to put a traffic signal opposite Brunswick Pines or to feed traffic through the Greenhorn/Bennett Street intersection and develop a new road up from Greenhorn Road to Loma Rica Drive. Mr. Rumsey noted that the environmental work would play a big factor in the final decision as to which alternative to build. Executive Director Landon reported that the County has collected over \$1 million in their mitigation fee program for this project and that it is being integrated into the Regional Transportation Mitigation Fee program.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Harriet McKay, a citizen of Nevada City, commented on how effectively she thought the stop signs were working at the Gold Flat Road/SR 49 ramps intersection.

Joy Waite, a citizen of Grass Valley, asked the Commission to consider bicycle transportation as part of the process when planning road improvements.

COMMISSION ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Chairman Ingram announced the two public open houses Caltrans will conduct regarding the widening of SR 49 on April 19th (at the Higgins Lions Community Association in south Nevada County) and April 26th (at Foothill Church near LaBarr Meadows Road) from 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Commissioner Brady asked Commissioner Susman to give a report at the May NCTC meeting on the success Truckee has achieved through a local option sales tax. Commissioner Susman mentioned he provided information at a recent LAFCo meeting on the Truckee sales tax measure. He said when Truckee incorporated twelve years ago the road funding deficit was approximately \$26 million. He added since the sales tax was implemented five or six years ago, all of Truckee's arterial roads have

been brought into good condition. Chairman Ingram asked to have this item agendized and to have materials provided for the May NCTC meeting in Truckee.

Commissioner Steele referred to his transportation website and noted that in addition to his personal opinions, links are provided to other communities and to national information pertaining to transportation.

SCHEDULE FOR NEXT MEETING:

The next Commission meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, May 18, 2005 at 9:30 a.m., at the Town of Truckee Council Chambers, 10183 Truckee Airport Road, Truckee, CA.

ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING

Chairman Ingram adjourned the meeting at 10:10 a.m.

Respectfully submitted: _____
Antoinette Perry, Administrative Assistant

Approved on: _____

By: _____
Patti Ingram, Chairman
Nevada County Transportation Commission